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A  
HANDY GUIDE  
TO  
DRY-FLY  
FISHING

By

GLOVER

BY

COTSWOLD ISYS, M.A.

London:

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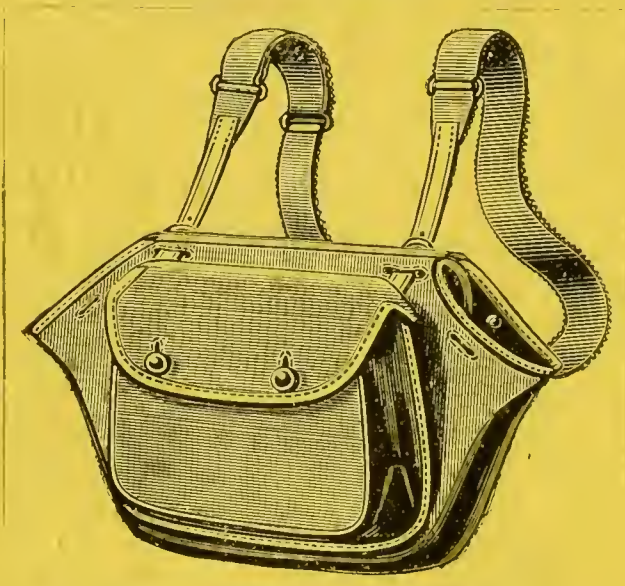
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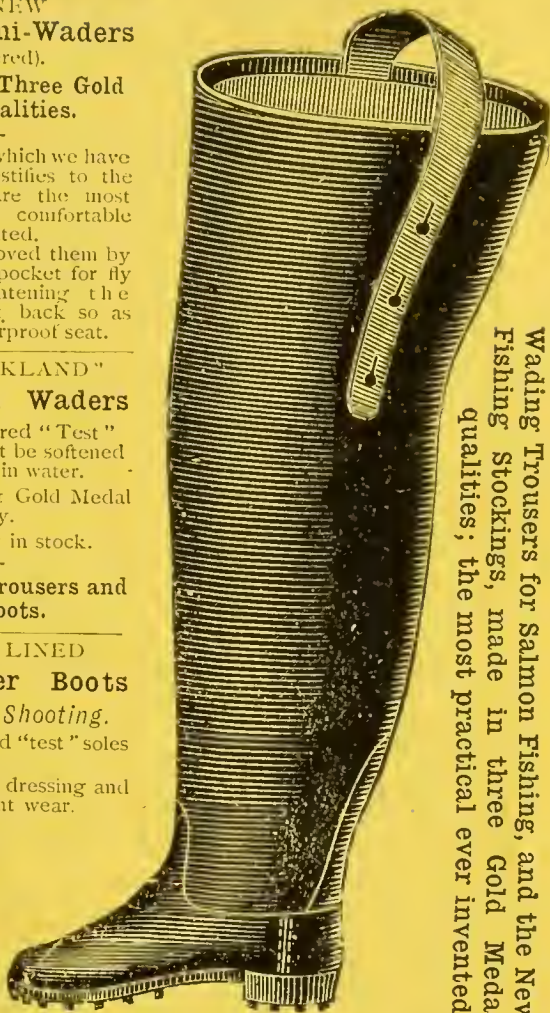
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WITH A SERIES OF GRADUATED EXERCISES  
FOR ALL WHO WISH TO LEARN IT.

BY

*[P. Sand]*  
COTSWOLD ISYS, M.A.,

AUTHOR OF "AN ANGLER'S STRANGE EXPERIENCES," &C.

*Rev. Richard Glover*

"Go call a coach, and let a coach be call'd,  
And let the man who calleth be the caller,  
And in his calling let him nothing call  
But coach ! coach ! coach ! O for a coach, ye gods."

*Chrononhotonthologos.*

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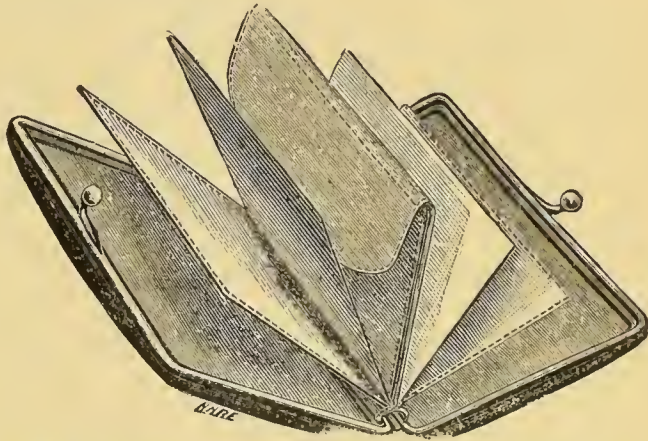
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TO  
A MASTER OF THIS ART  
AND CHIEF FOUNDER OF THE FLY-FISHERS' CLUB,  
MY FRIEND,  
R. B. MARSTON, ESQ.,  
Editor of *The Fishing Gazette*.

## THE BOOKLET TO THE READER—

### AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL.

I MAKE my bow to the angling world as one who believes he is, as the Police say, “Wanted.”

I beg to say that I am not a compilation. I was not, like a charity collection, “begged;” nor, like a lost umbrella, “borrowed;” nor, like a gipsy’s child, “stolen.” I am the legitimate son of my father. He enlisted early in the F. F. Regiment of Foot. My mother, who was of Puritan descent, was named *Drudgery Patience Experience*. Three children were born to them. My eldest brother was a mixed sort of character, and was pretty well known to the public under the name of *Strange Experience*, though some critical wiseacres tried to damn him because of a bad habit that he had of punning. The wiser, however, discerned that he had some good stuff in him to which even that could not blind them. My second brother took to ballad singing about fish—a sort of poetic “Grove.” He was christened accordingly *Lyra Piscatoria*. He has not “come out” yet, but hopes to do so—if anglers have any taste.\* I was the third son. I was a self-taught youth, and picked up my education—not exactly in the gutter, but—down the Coln way, near the Cotswolds. My father intended me for a Drill Sergeant. As such, I offer my humble services. My highest ambition is to stand in relation to Mr. Halford’s *maznum opus* as such an officer does to the Adjutant on the Parade Ground.

Of course, my reader, you will go on to put yourself under him after continuing a year or so with me. If you don’t, you deserve to remain all your life among The Awkward Squad.

\* See Advertisement at the end.

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# A HANDY GUIDE

TO

## DRY-FLY FISHING.



“If at first you don’t succeed  
Try, try, and try again.”

NURSERY RHYME.

### PROLOGUE:

#### *ENTHUSIASTICAL AND STIMULATIVE.*

THE elegant art of dry-fly fishing has made enormous strides during the last few years. Fifty years ago it was hardly known. Fly-fishing itself dates back to long before the time of Izaak Walton. Fishing with the natural fly, in the form of dibbing, is almost as old as the art of fishing itself, but the art of making artificial flies and angling with them is probably very little older than the epoch of Walton, though the father of modern angling appears to have known nothing of dry-fly fishing. Who its real inventor was I do not know. All I know is that he ought to be immortalized whoever he was. Perhaps some reader more learned in the history of the art than I am may inform us that so we may canonize him in our grateful memories.

The art seems to claim the southern part of our island for the place of its nativity, and the practice

of it at present is chiefly confined to it. Strange to say, however, while I am correcting the proof the following appears in *The Fishing Gazette* :—

“It is somewhat curious that through the author of ‘North Country Flies’ should come information concerning the early use of the dry fly. In a letter sent to that entertaining and versatile writer by a medical man, now living in Orkney, occurs the following passage: ‘About fifty years ago, when I was at school in my native place (Berwick-on-Tweed) we had a teacher of French (Monsieur Mazzoni) who, the boys soon discovered, was as fond of a day’s trout fishing on the Whitadder as of teaching his class. I well remember getting some flies from him which he claimed would revolutionize fly-fishing. He certainly caught trout with them, and so did I. His theory was that flies should float on the water, and to accomplish this he made the wings of oil-silk. Some years ago I got a Northumberland county policeman, a good fly-dresser, to make for me a few similar to M. Mazzoni’s, which I used with success on the upper parts of the Whitadder. As oil-silk is made of different hues, a variety of colour can be imparted to the wing.’ *Templar* wisely adds, ‘This oil-silk-winged fly must have been a top-heavy affair, and could not have cocked in a way to satisfy a Hampshire artist of the present day.’ ”

Our northern brethren still swear by the wet-fly,<sup>1</sup> and affect to despise the dry, although we are pleased

<sup>1</sup> See a poetical description of both styles, drawn from life, in “North Country Fly-Fishing” and “Hampshire Fly-Fishing,” in my “Angler’s Strange Experiences.”



to observe that conversions are moving northward in a decidedly evident manner.

One leading cause of these conversions is, no doubt, the influence of Mr. Halford's admirable treatises,<sup>1</sup> in which the art is described by the hand of a master, who is himself an enthusiastic devotee of it. It is hard indeed to resist the fascination of his enthusiastic descriptions of dry-fly fishing, and harder still to answer the skilful logic of his lucid reasoning when he demonstrates its superiority from the laws of nature.

The formation of angling clubs, especially of the London "Fly-Fishers' Club," almost all of whose members are dry-flyers, and the discussions which are constantly taking place in them on the respective merits of the two styles; the influence also of the many able pens which extol its felicities and excellencies in such journals as *The Field*, *Land and Water*, and *The Fishing Gazette*, whose editors are in each case accomplished masters of the art; the Piscatorial Exhibitions and the Fishing Tournaments which have arisen during the last few years—have all been additional factors in the advancement of this delightful modern art. Any way, it is evident that there is a great leaning towards it even among the prejudiced, and many are showing an anxiety to become its disciples. Even our aristocratic ladies are beginning to perceive that so fine and elegant an art is worthy of their attention, and not a few of

<sup>1</sup> "Dry-Fly Fishing," by Frederic M. Halford, Esq., and "Floating Flies, and How to Dress Them," by Frederic M. Halford, Esq. (Sampson Low, Marston & Co.)

them are already proficient in it. One recent convert among the fair sex has lamented publicly "that ten years of her life (dating of course from the time that she could wield a rod) had passed before she discovered" its unsuspected delights. The art is indeed so delicate that ladies are peculiarly qualified to excel in it. In learning the art, certainly the "back-hair" may occasionally create some difficulty; and it would, no doubt, be uncommonly inconvenient to have an artificial fly fasten itself in the "improver." But if they practice the following lessons, where they will be free from the observation of the sterner sex, these little probable *contretemps* may be avoided or conquered without awkward embarrassments.

It has struck me, then, that it might be opportune to offer a few hints that may be useful to many in their desire to become initiated into its successful practice. It is only for such that I write this Primer. An expert will learn nothing from it, nor does he indeed need to learn. But, looking back to my own days of ignorance of it, and to the great difficulties which I had in mastering it, mainly by self-education, and sympathizing sincerely with the desire to learn the pleasing art, and rejoicing in the hope of the enjoyment the young disciple will derive from its practice if he will persevere in his attempts to learn it, I have thought that a little Primer upon it might be very acceptable to many anglers and would-be anglers, and practically useful to them to this end.

Let me begin, then, by saying that, better than any of my hints, or even of the study of Mr. Hal-

ford's great text-book, will be a living tutor. Let me advise the disciple, if he possibly can, to put himself under such a tutor. If he have the good fortune to have a friend who is an expert, let him ask that friend to allow him to accompany him on some of his angling expeditions, and let him watch him, carefully observing his ways—taking care, however, to stand some distance away from him so as not to scare his fish, nor annoy him by asking him questions at inopportune moments. But it is not every man who has the advantage of possessing such a friend. And it must be confessed that an expert must be a very amiable man if he consent to be accompanied by a learner on his fishing excursions. A good angler loves “the bliss of solitude” on such occasions; nor does he care when fish are rising to be watched (it always makes me nervous, for one), still less to be bothered by questions, and less still to spend what is always precious time to allow a friend to whip the stream for practice—perhaps with *his* rod. If the learner, however, has such an amiable and self-denying friend, pray let him go to *him* rather than read a booklet of this kind.

But if not, the latter, or something of a kindred nature, is not the only alternative. It is quite possible to find a teacher who is certainly willing to teach, who will give him in a few lessons far more serviceable instruction than I can with a mere pen. Let him find out some professional dry-fly teacher. Does he say he would gladly do so, and would not object to the fee, if he knew of such an one, but that he does not, and would be very thankful if he knew where to



find one? If so, as Dr. Marigold says, "I'll tell you what I'll do with you." If he will drop me a line through the publishers I will direct him to such a tutor. I do not like to mention any particular names of any kind of traders or professionals, as it might seem invidious, and savour of favouritism. Besides, do you not see, my reader, that if I mention none, *all* the tackle makers and *all* the professionals will have my "Guide" on sale? It will obviously be to their interest to do so, for the more disciples of dry-fly fishing are multiplied the greater will be the demand for all kinds of dry-fly tackle; and I therefore hope my "Guide" will be of real advantage to the trade. Moreover, to mention individuals would lead to a suspicion which would be wholly undeserved, as I have no sort of connection with trade or with angling professionals of any kind. I write solely in the interests of art and of recreation.

For those, however, who from distance from town or from other circumstances, cannot obtain such tuition, let me proceed to give a few practical directions that may be serviceable.

## EXERCISE I.

*SCENE: A LAWN. HANDLING THE WHIP.*

GET a light ten-foot rod (not a choice one that you care much about) with a rough and preferably heavy reel line, but do not yet attach to it any gut cast. Let out about a rod's length of it, and practice on a lawn, striking the air about with it in any direction, so as to get used to wielding it firmly.

Grasp your rod firmly a little above the reel, keeping your bent fingers down, with your thumb upwards, but not touching the line.

Keep your arm pretty close to your side so as to use the muscles of the forearm and wrist and not those of your shoulder.

Do not raise your arm above your head. Practise in this way for half an hour for two or three days until you can feel that you can use the rod with perfect freedom and force. Strike *at the air*, not at the grass, and get the power of cutting it with your line as with a sword.

A chief factor in success is a perfectly free and masterful handling of the rod. If you notice a beginner at fly-fishing of any kind, you will see that

he tries to *lift* his fly and line from the ground with his arm up, and holding his rod stiffly as if it were a long pole. But in the hands of a master the rod is a flexible power like that of a good four-horse coachman's whip in the hands of an accomplished Jehu. Indeed, a good whip is certain to make a good fly-fisher. The late Tom Bosworth to wit. He was such a crack whip that with his four-horse flogger he could pick a pipe out of a man's mouth; and, when he took to dry-fly fishing, few could drive such a long, accurate, and graceful cast. If you look at a bad coachman (you will see plenty in Rotten Row) you will see that he always weakly flicks *the thong*; whereas the good one does everything powerfully, and at the same time easily and gracefully by means of the whip-stick. It is not something held *in* his hand and *by* his arm: it is rather a part of his hand and an elongation of his arm, so thoroughly is it *one* with them.

The former will have his eye on the thong and make an awkward dive at the middle of it to catch it; or will drop his stick (looking at *it*) towards the ground and try to twirl the thong round it, while the latter will have his eye on his horses and the road and not look at his whip at all. So a good dry-flyer will have his eye on the river and the rise and take not so much as a glance at either rod or line. His practised *hand* will see these without his eye.



## EXERCISE II.

### *HOW TO DRIVE A FLY.*

FOR the next exercises, let out a length of line a little longer than your rod, and gradually double the length of it. *Try to drive it from you in a straight line*, aiming at some mark which you have placed that distance away from you, say an old hat, and see how near you can get to it.

At first you will most likely find the line drop loosely and in curls not far from your feet; but persevere, using gradually increasing force, until you drive it right away from you.

To this end, you must avoid letting the force fall on the extreme end of your line as though you were trying to fling *that* away from you. But endeavour to let the force of your arm fall fully on that part of the line nearest the top of your rod, forgetting the end of the line altogether.

Be very careful to let your line go out behind you to its full length, before you use any forward force; and let that forward force be not jerky, but soft and gradual. If, on returning your line, you hear a crack (as from a coachman's whip) you may be quite sure

that you have failed to let it go its full length behind, and you should practice until you can return it without any crack.

“Accidents,” however, “will happen in the best regulated families,” and sometimes even the expert will crack off his flies. I have sometimes fished hard all day without losing a single fly throughout it, while on another occasion I have flicked off half-a-dozen. This may depend on circumstances of various kinds, such as wind, heat, bad gut, old flies, and even the angler’s condition of health or temper. The whisky-flask is very favourable to the flicking off of flies.

Endeavour to make the force of your forward cast creep, as it were, from your wrist all up the rod, but falling with its greatest force *on the upper part of the middle joint*. This will cause the force to fall on that part of the line nearest to the top of the rod, which force will then travel all along the line bellying it up and out into a straight line.

In bringing the line backwards do not let your rod go much further back than your right shoulder.

Practise this exercise until you can swish it out with force and *ease*; the latter being a great desideratum. Half an hour a day for a week ought to give you this mastery. Hardly less will suffice. *Festina lente*: Make haste slowly. But you may gradually let out a little more line each day.

### EXERCISE III.

#### *HOW TO USE THE WHIPCORD.*

You may now venture to *put on a gut cast* of three yards length to your reel line, to which you may attach an artificial fly. For economy's sake, let it be a coarse and common one, for you will be sure to flick several off before you get *au fait*.

Be careful not to have too fine a cast (nor a line disproportionally thick), or you will not be able to get it out straight from the reel line. The reel line itself should taper gradually towards the end, and so should the gut cast also. The upper end of the cast should be of coarse gut gradually tapering, until, towards the fly, it should be exactly as fine as the gut on the fly itself.

Now try and make your *fly* fall on the hat, or, better still *into* it. But the light gut at the end will make it more difficult for you to hit it therewith than with the end of your coarse reel line. You must be more *gentle* in the use of your force now, though relaxing none of the *firmness* of your stroke: and you must be more than ever careful to let the line go its full length behind you. Should you draw it back

before it has done this, you will hear a crack—and your fly will be gone! But these fines to fly-dressers will not be paid in vain, if they every time teach you the need of more care and less hurry.

These crack-offs will be more likely to occur in hot, dry days; for then, of course, the gut is more brittle. Hence then the necessity of well soaking both cast and flies before you use them—unless you are a man of fortune and like to support tackle-makers.

In actual fishing, the cast and fly should always be previously soaked. More fish are lost by the neglect of this precaution, perhaps, than in any other way.

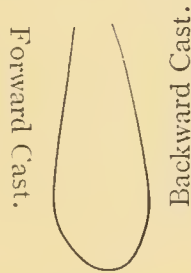


# EXERCISE IV.

## MIND YOUR EYE!

ONE very important rule must be placed by itself. In drawing your line back or making the backward cast, do not attempt to jerk it back towards yourself, but draw it gently but firmly up from the ground *as toward the zenith immediately over your head.*<sup>1</sup> And in casting it forward do likewise. If you do this with gentle but firm force your line and fly will take care of themselves.

In doing this, make the backward and forward cast describe the shape of a horse-shoe on your right. An expert will make it go back straight over



his shoulder, but should you attempt this at first, you will most likely jerk your fly into your face, and—have to go to a surgeon with a hook in your lip or a fly in your ear! or, if a lady, *perhaps in your pretty eye!*

<sup>1</sup> I have not consulted a single book in writing my “Guide,” but since writing I see that I am confirmed in this advice by Mr. G. J. Chatterton in his excellent little “*Essay on Fly-Fishing*”

## EXERCISE V.

*SCENE : A POND. TAKING AIM.*

WHEN you can accomplish these exercises satisfactorily without flicking your fly off, you may go to some stream or pond and practice upon it.

In some respects this will be easier than on land, because the constant wetting of your line and gut will facilitate casting.

But do not practise on a water which you wish to fish or which your friends fish, for your 'prentice flogging will only scare the fish, and make them more difficult to catch hereafter. Do not be selfish even in such matters. An angler ought to be a noble *man* if he be not a nobleman; and "*Noblesse oblige*" (which may be freely and properly anglicised, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, even so do unto them") should be the angler's motto. Lovers of the gentle art should be gentlemen.

Well, then, do not choose a good river for such practice, but choose some pond or canal.

Now your aim must be at some imaginary rise at

a certain spot, or at some leaf or other object in the water, and try by gradual lengths of line how near you can get to it in a line straight from you to it.

When you can make a straight and accurate cast of from ten to fifteen yards, you may be tolerably well satisfied.

But here is another golden rule that must be placed by itself—

## EXERCISE VI.

*NOTA BENE ; SELF-DELUSION.*

You must not aim directly at *it*. Rather aim at about a yard *over* the spot on which you wish your fly to fall ; that is, imagine the level of the water to be a foot or two higher than it really is. This will prevent your fly striking the water with a flop that would scare any fish (save perhaps a chub), or from giving him rappee on his nose and making him sneeze, but will cause it to fall gently on the spot like a gossamer.

Never forget this rule. It is of first-rate importance in casting the fly lightly and making it alight naturally, and for preserving you from that fisherman's curse—a blank day.



## EXERCISE VII.

### *HOW TO CAST A DRY FLY.*

You need not for a while begin the practice of drying your fly. Be content for a few times to leave this, and only endeavour to get facility in straight and accurate and light casting.

When you feel you can do this pretty well, you may begin to practise dry-fly fishing which may be shortly defined as the art of so manipulating and casting your fly that it shall not sink below the surface of the water, but shall float like a natural living fly upon it and down it.

In order to this, then, instead of casting your fly, after each backward cast, on to the water you must drive it backwards and forwards, quickly and *firmly* but not violently, *through the air*, say four times (the times will have to vary according to the state of the atmosphere and the size and nature of your fly) and not till the *fourth* time, at least, make your cast fall on the water. This will completely dry out all the moisture and cause the wings or hackle to expand and float on the water like a living insect.

Remember ever in drying your fly not to think of your line but only of your rod. Let all your force fall on *that*, and not on the line ; and try to use as little force as possible.

If you have a pliable and springy rod, extremely little will be necessary.

For this easy, springy pliability, so essential to comfortable dry-fly fishing, I myself infinitely prefer a spliced rod to a ferruled one.

The hard, inflexible metal, unless very thin, must more or less act as a break or check on the uniformity of the spring. Ferruled rods, no doubt, are pleasant luxuries to laziness, but in my opinion they have no other virtue. But *chacun à son goût*.<sup>1</sup>

On the subject of dry-fly tackle, I must also add that in this mode of fishing, the quality of the fly is as important as that of the driver.

The flies of some makers, owing to faulty construction in regard to the size and pose of the wings, the weight of the hook, and the deficiency of the hackle—can hardly be made to float at all, even by an expert.

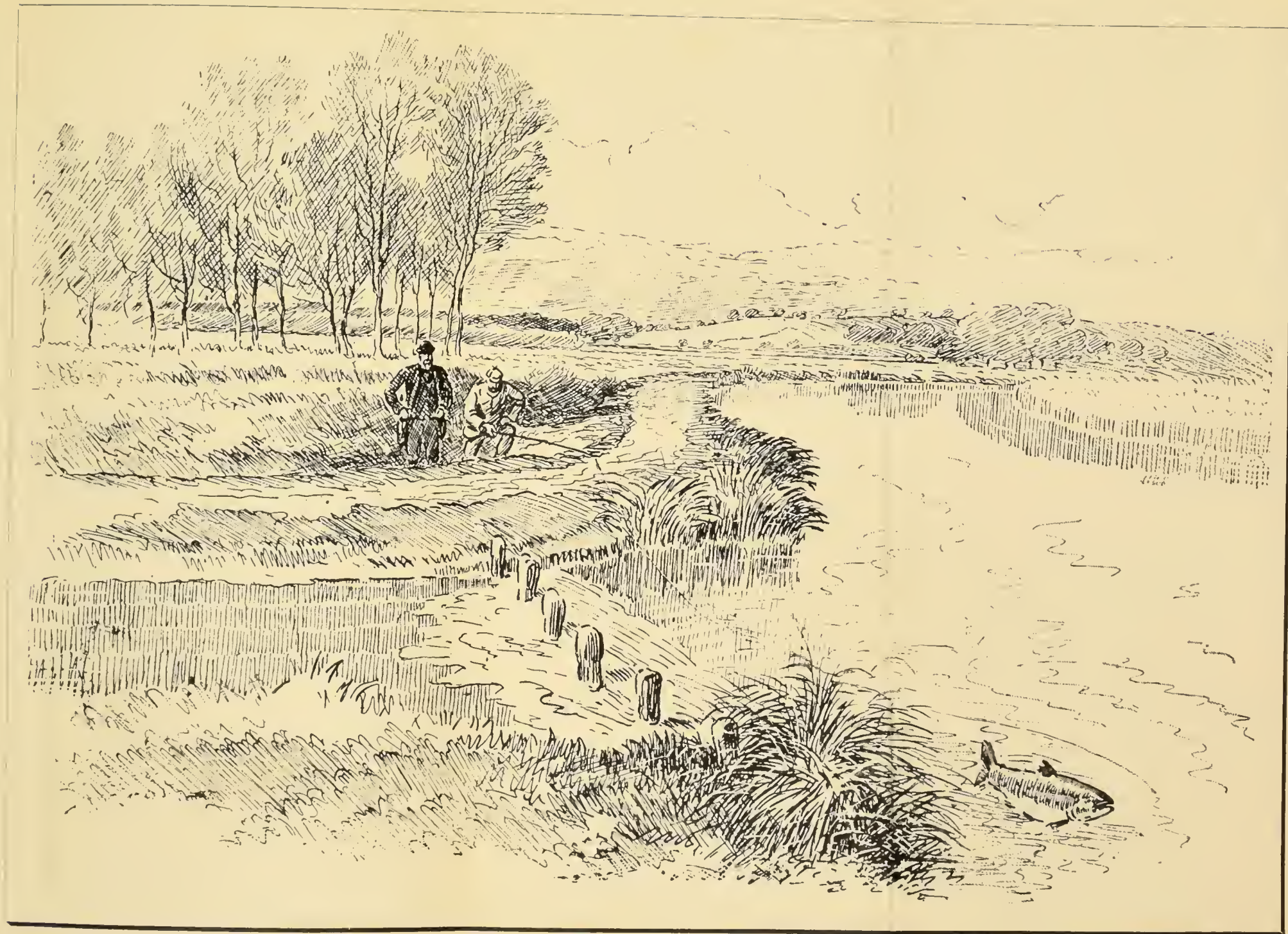
By and by you must study Mr. Halford's book on "Floating Flies, and How to Dress Them." Meanwhile take this hint: Buy your flies at the best makers. Economy in respect to tackle is really the folly of a spendthrift. "Cheap and nasty" applies to nothing more truly than to cheap flies.

The flies of most tackle-shops are too large.

The *Fishing Gazette* will sufficiently indicate where the best may be procured. It is a pity they are so dear—at least, I have said so when I have got "hung up" many times.

<sup>1</sup> It is but just to add that our *best* makers turn out such scientifically-adjusted ferruled rods that they can hardly be surpassed by spliced ones.





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## EXERCISE VIII.

### *HOW TO CAST UP-STREAM.*

THE next thing will be to practise *casting up-stream*, so as to allow your dry fly to float down it with the current in a straight line for some yards without sinking, and without any check from your line, just as a living fly would do, and does perhaps before your eyes.

To do this, you must cast as before, and see that your fly falls on the water before any of your reel line ; which will not be the case if you lower your rod too much in your cast, nor unless you gently raise it immediately after the fly falls.

Keep gently raising your rod until the fly has floated down a few yards, and, long before it has reached you, pick it gently off the water and dry the fly again as before. Unless you thus raise your rod, it is obvious that your line will become loose and baggy, so that if a fish were to seize your fly, you could not strike him, and the fish would almost certainly get away.

In casting over a rising fish you must drop your fly at least *a yard above or beyond him*, and in a

straight line with him, so that the fly shall sail over his nose down-stream.

In drying your fly, look out for trees, or bushes, or long grass behind you, *or* for squalls ! for otherwise there will most likely be a smash—if not of your rod, at least of your amiable temper.

To keep your line from falling *too low* behind you, and touching the grass or hooking into a button-top weed (made evidently exactly to fit a hook and hold it very fast), remember the hint of your early lesson about not sending your rod much further back than your shoulder. Be *prepared* for the contingency of a hitch behind : always *expect* it (and you will rarely at first be disappointed!) : so as to be able *to ease* your cast at once.

If you are not, be prepared for another thing—to go home with a broken rod, and with a temper that will not add to domestic happiness.

## EXERCISE IX.

### *HOW TO CAST ACROSS-STREAM.*

IN casting across-stream, you must let out your cast a yard or two beyond what is necessary to hit the point you wish to reach. If you cast a taut line the fly will swirl towards mid-stream in a way that the fish know no natural fly would do. But if, by the above means, you cast a looser line it will float aside the opposite bank for a yard or two in a natural manner.

You should rarely cast across straight opposite to you, but a little *to the left* of the flowing stream (supposing it to be flowing towards your right), *i.e.*, two or three yards *up* and across.

Lead your reel line down with the point of your rod, carefully lifting the slack off the water; but so as not to check the gut cast.

If you can cast your fly on to the bank, and nick it lightly on to the water, so much the better.

In fishing a hatch, or under a wall, aim right *at* the wall. Your fly will then fall as though it fell from off the wall naturally, which is deadly.

## EXERCISE X.

*TO CAST A DRY FLY DOWN-STREAM.*

You may now proceed to practise the still more difficult art of *casting the dry fly down-stream*: for sometimes the greatest devotee of up-stream fishing is obliged, from various circumstances that he will meet with, so to fish.

To do this, you must not, as in up-stream fishing, cast with a straight-out and comparatively taut line, but you must endeavour when you cast the line forward to drag it gently *back and up ere the fly falls*: and aim at a spot in the water some three yards short of the full length of your line (or if at a rising fish measure your length accordingly) lowering the point of your rod as it falls.

This will cause the line to be a little wavy and loose, and thus the fly will be able to float down the stream for some yards dry, without any check; whereas if you cast it fully forward the fly will stop where it alights, and drag, and this, of course, would make any fish perceive its unnaturalness at once. In rough water or in rapid streams this is not of



such serious consequence, but in a smooth or very clear water it is fatal.

But as the fly floats down, you must be gradually raising the point of your rod so as to be ready to strike a fish or to recover your fly delicately for another cast.

Let not the learner give too intensive a force to that word "strike," if he value fish or tackle. It always seems to me a word only applicable to mahseer fishing. "Nick" would be a fitter, were it not such an ugly word. Any way, a slight twitch of the wrist downwards and upwards is all the force that it requires, and if only the line be taut it hardly requires that, unless the rod be a very supple one.

For a similar reason to one above given, I would add, *Do not use looped flies*. Besides its great visibility, the loop is another check to the fly. Its only advantage is to pamper laziness.

The little trouble of attaching the fly to the cast by the fisherman's knot, or, if an eyed-hook be used, by the jam knot, is more than compensated by the uniform fineness of the cast, and the help it affords to its natural floating.

Avoid haste in making the knot, or you will pay the penalty in the loss of the best fish. "The more haste the less speed."

## EXERCISE XI.

*THE HORIZONTAL CAST.*

HAVING mastered the overhand cast, proceed next to practise what is called *The Horizontal Cast*.

In fly-fishing we often come to parts of a stream where, owing to the presence of trees behind one, and of trees or branches extending over the stream, it is impossible to reach a fish by the over-hand cast, and, indeed, some fishermen prefer the horizontal cast under all circumstances, since, by means of it, the motion of the rod is less likely to be seen by the fish.

It is, however, more difficult to accomplish neatly than the other.

The name sufficiently explains what it is, viz., to ply the rod with a motion parallel with the horizon or with the level of the water.

To master it, practise, at first on a lawn, and afterwards on the water itself as before, to ply your rod in this way with various lengths of line, swishing it backwards and forwards at right angles with your body.

Mr. Halford well describes the action of the line

in this cast by the blade of a reaper's hook, the handle of which represents the position of the rod.

By practice, you will soon be able to drop your fly on to any given spot with the same accuracy as with the over-hand cast. Nothing, however, but continual practice will let you into the secret of doing so. Nevertheless, its utility is such that it is worth any pains to be able to do it with dexterity.

There are other casts in this fine art such as the *Switch*, the *Down Cut*, the *Steeple Cast*, &c., but these are a little beyond the sphere of a Primer. My province is only to prepare you for what, in university parlance, we call "Mods." These casts rather belong to "Finals."

Strange to say, however, your "coach" cannot offer a better wish for you than that when you go in for fishing with the dry-fly you may be "*plucked*."

## EXERCISE XI.

*"I GO A-FISHING," BUT NOT DRIVING TANDEM.*

AFTER careful, persevering practice of the above exercises, you may now begin really *to fish* with the dry fly.

Do not put on more than *one* fly. You will have, of course, to take care that it is the *right* one, though direction as to flies for various seasons and parts of the day and different waters, hardly falls within the province of this Guide, which is restricted to the art of plying them. Such guidance is easily procurable elsewhere.

On lakes or broad, smooth streams a dropper may be used, or even two, and you can fish dry. In wet-fly fishing you may put on half a dozen, if you like, of every size from a moth to a midge, but in dry-fly fishing one is best. In narrow streams, or in streams with many bends and divers currents, even one dropper will cause the tail-fly to drag, and the tail-fly to drag the dropper, and one or both may be drowned. Therefore my strong advice to the dry-fly fisherman is—*Never drive tandem*, except on a wide, straight road. The leader and wheeler will rarely go well together. And if the wheeler stumble on a weed, the leader will be sure to twist round to look at him,



and the fish to look at both with a suspicious eye that will make it afraid of an accident to itself. It will then be a case of scuttle fish.

Beyond now putting in practice the above rules at the water, there is nothing that need be added save this: In dry-fly fishing it is of especial importance to *hide yourself as much as possible from the fish* by keeping as far back as you well can from the water's edge, and by availing yourself of any intervening objects, such as the stump of a tree, bushes, weeds, or rocks; or making your cast kneeling.

Dry-fly fishing is of little or no use in thick or opaque water. It is emphatically the kind of fishing for clear chalk-streams, or other clear waters, in which, of course, the fish are peculiarly likely to be observant and wary of the angler, and of any motion whatever.

Suppose you begin with dace, or, in the autumn, with roach.

If you can catch the former with the dry fly, you may be quite sure you can catch trout or grayling. But do not vex a trout stream until you *can* catch them. And when you can catch trout or grayling with the dry fly you have a source of felicity in store for you on which I may congratulate you.

Assiduous practice of the above rules and exercises will, I venture to say, make any angler a dry-fly fisherman. But do not expect to become an expert in a year; it will require more than one season to enable you to do it really well. And all is not learnt in the art when you can cast your dry fly well. I have only given you a Primer. To make you a

master of the art, I must hand you on—as the old *pædagogus* used to do—to Mr. Halford. Even he, however, cannot do for you what experience will. You remember the sentence of your Delectus—“*Experientia docet.*” In every art as well as in philosophy the words of Tennyson are profoundly true—

“Others’ follies teach us not,  
Nor much their wisdom preaches,  
But most of sterling worth is what  
Our own experience teaches.”

And now, my disciple, I bid you farewell. May you become (which is very likely) a better dry-fly fisherman than your preceptor! for a man may be even erudite in his knowledge of any art, and yet be a comparatively indifferent artist himself. A Ruskin can write better on the philosophy and even technicality of art than a Millais, yet the latter may be the superior painter. So in fishing: the knowledge of the art by no means implies superior handicraft in its exercise. However, when, some sunny day in June, say three years hence, you have taken your M.A. as Master of this Art, and sit, *sub tegmine fagi*, taking your lunch by the side of some clear, sweet murmuring stream, with a couple of brace of trout bejewelling the grass at your feet, you will look back with gratitude to my unpretending little Primer, and—will recommend it to all whose enjoyment in their recreative hours you wish to promote.

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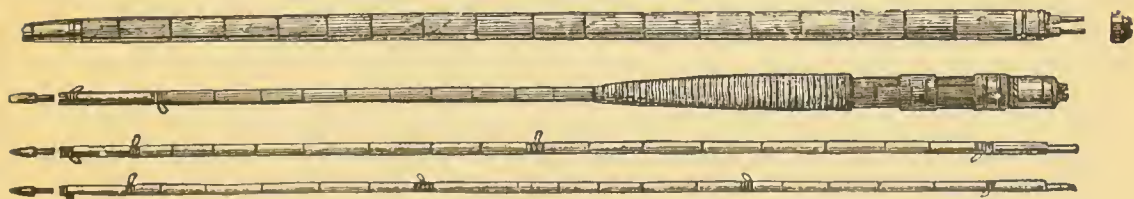
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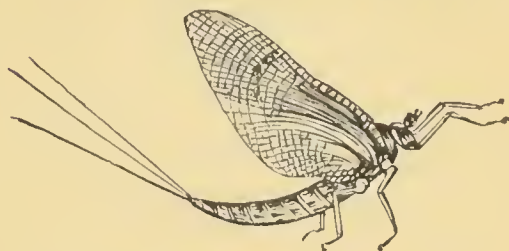
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